

La Revue musicale (1920-1940)

La Revue musicale was published in Paris from 1920 to 1940. The journal reappeared after the Second World War, first sporadically in 1946 and then regularly from 1952 to 1991.¹ This annotated index, however, is restricted to the journal's first publication run during the interwar period.

From 1920 to 1940, *La Revue musicale* was printed in a consistent format and size: it measured 19.5 cm by 25.5 cm, and averaged ninety-six pages for regular issues and 128 pages for special issues, with additional plates and musical supplements. The journal was published in two separate runs: the first and most extensive run was printed on paper of ordinary quality; the second was more luxurious, printed on vellum paper and individually numbered. The luxury edition was reserved exclusively for the journal's subscribers. Once a year, the journal published a table of contents for the previous year's issues.

Issues were published monthly until 1940, with a brief interruption of one to three months during the summertime; overall, the journal produced eleven issues annually from 1920 to 1931, ten issues per year from 1932 to 1936, and nine issues annually from 1937 to 1940.

There were more than 1,300 subscribers² to the journal and a total of around 3,000 copies printed for every regular issue.³ Special issues were produced in even higher numbers, but we are unable to provide more precise figures at this stage in our research. Even though the journal was widely distributed, its circulation continually remained a source of concern for the journal's founder. There were several foreign subscribers; in fact, there were as many in Europe as in North and South America.

La Revue musicale was founded in 1920 at the instigation of musicologist Henry Prunières (1886-1942) and had a board of directors that included Albert Doily,⁴ Gaston Gallimard,⁵ and Prunières himself. The purpose of the journal was to engage with the profound transformations in musical culture of the period while also publishing articles with an historical perspective. The new journal's role in supporting the advancement of music reflected its founder's desire to instruct music-lovers, a pedagogical mission that followed the general trend in France to foster

¹ Éditions Richard-Masse took over publication of the journal after the Second World War. Although publication activity ceased in 1991, the journal's collections were purchased by Éditions Hermann in Paris.

² According to Henry Prunières *cf.* *La Revue musicale* (November 1929, vol. 10, n° 98), p. 92.

³ In a letter to Léon Vallas dated May 30, 1920 (Fonds LV, Ms Vallas, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon), Henry Prunières explains that he planned to publish a total of 36,000 copies of the journal annually. At this time, the journal put forth at least eleven issues a year. Based on these figures, we estimate around 3,000 copies were printed per issue.

⁴ Albert Doily became the publisher of *La Revue musicale*.

⁵ Gaston Gallimard (1881-1975) was hired in 1910 as the managing editor of the *Nouvelle Revue française* (*NRF*). Active in the cultural milieu, he also managed the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier. Along with his brother Raymond, he founded Éditions Gallimard in 1918, which henceforth managed the *NRF* as well as *La Revue musicale* for a few years. In 1920, Prunières required the financial support and infrastructure of a publishing house. He raised the necessary capital and, with the help of Gaston Gallimard, signed an agreement with the *NRF*'s publishing house, which took over management of the subscription service and administration of his journal. The business agreement between the *NRF* and *La Revue musicale* ended in 1926 when Prunières decided to manage the journal himself.

musical knowledge and appreciation.⁶ The journal was therefore directed not only to musicians but also to music-lovers and amateurs of art in general.

Despite serious health problems that worsened by the end of the 1930s, Prunières headed up the journal until November 1939. He was assisted by the music critic André Cœuroy,⁷ editor-in-chief, until 1936, and then by composer and music critic Robert Bernard,⁸ who took on the roles of editor-in-chief and co-managing editor from 1937 to 1939. Bernard was appointed managing editor in December 1939 and held the position until the outbreak of the Second World War; he took up his role as managing editor of the journal toward the end of the 1940s.

Prunières was considered an important specialist in seventeenth-century French and Italian music. He studied music history with Romain Rolland at the Sorbonne from 1906 until 1913 when he defended – and then published – his doctoral dissertation on “Italian opera in France before Lully.” Beginning in 1930, the musicologist supervised the production of a complete edition of Lully’s works, although it would only be completed after his death. He also published a biography on the French composer as well as several articles on various subjects relating to the seventeenth century. One can see Prunières’s profound interest in music of the past reflected in *La Revue musicale*, given the privileged position early music is accorded in the journal.

Prunières, however, did not confine his journal to strictly musicological subjects. This “friend of Stravinsky, Alban Berg, Milhaud, and biographer of Monteverdi and Lully”⁹ conceived *La Revue musicale* as a project that could bring together related disciplines, such as dance¹⁰ and literature, with increasingly diverse styles, genres, and aesthetics. This integrative and interdisciplinary conceit was proclaimed in the subtitle of the journal from its very foundation: “International monthly journal of early and modern musical art.”

La Revue musicale’s regular issues comprised two large sections. The first contained leading articles, the number of which varied according to their length; in general, there were five to six articles per issue that totaled up to around sixty pages.

⁶ See Michel Duchesneau, “*La Revue musicale* (1920-1940) and the Founding of a Modern Music,” *Music’s Intellectual History: Founders, Followers and Fads*, edited by Zdravko Blažeković and Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie, New York, RILM (RILM Perspectives), 2009, p. 743-750.

⁷ Jean Belime (1891-1976), known as André Cœuroy. Music critic and French musicologist, he studied at the École normale supérieure in Paris where he passed the French national competitive examination in German. He then took courses in composition with Max Reger in Germany. From 1929 to 1939 he managed the musical section of the League of Nations. A remarkably active music critic, he wrote a number of important books during the period, including a collaborative monograph with André Schaeffner on jazz (1926), as well as *Panorama de la musique contemporaine* (1928), and *Panorama de la radio* (1929).

⁸ Composer and music critic, Robert Bernard (1900-1971) was of Swiss origin. After finishing his studies in composition in Geneva, he worked as a lecturer at the Schola Cantorum and as a music critic. He contributed to *La Revue musicale* with increasing regularity and eventually became the editor-in-chief. Among his writings include biographies on Franck, Aubert, and Roussel, as well as a monograph, *Les tendances de la musique française moderne* (1930).

⁹ “Hommage à Henry Prunières,” brochure from *La Revue musicale*, 1953, p. 18.

¹⁰ For a discussion of dance in *La Revue musicale*, see Marie-Noëlle Lavoie, “Dance in Henry Prunières’s *La Revue musicale*: Between the Early and the Modern,” *Music’s Intellectual History: Founders, Followers, & Fads*, edited by Zdravko Blažeković and Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie, New York, RILM (RILM Perspectives), 2009, p. 761-772.

The range of subjects broached in the first section of the journal was exceptionally wide, and taken up by an equally large number of authors. One finds as many articles on aesthetics,¹¹ repertoire, and performance issues relating to early music as to contemporary music.

As a result of his particular sensitivity to internationalism, Prunières paid special attention to musical debates occurring outside as well as inside France's borders. The journal contains several important articles that not only paint an exceptional portrait of the musical world and the ideas circulating within, but also situate musical creation in an international context. What is more, these articles deal in depth with issues of musical language and aesthetics, such as modernity, polytonality, the reception of Schönberg's music, and neoclassicism, as well as the influence of jazz and technological developments (like the record, cinema, and radio) on musical creation.

La Revue musicale contains a remarkable collection of articles on contemporary composers (including Dukas, Debussy, Hindemith, Ravel, Satie, Stravinsky, Caplet, Roussel, Milhaud, and Honegger) while also presenting its readers with prominent articles on early music and thus making an important contribution to the public's knowledge and the development of its taste for this repertoire. There are several articles devoted to the edition of early music, the publication of texts and correspondence, and the historical study of composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century (such as Boieldieu, Mouret, Rameau, and Lully). The considerable investment in expanding knowledge and appreciation of early music significantly influenced the new generation of composers of the 1920s and 1930s, as they enjoyed increasing access to the music of the past and its attendant aesthetic theories.

The journal often focused on specific topics like ballet, the relationship between music and literature (see, for example, the special issues on Ronsard and Goethe), and the present state of music in the world (“Géographie musicale 1931 [Musical Geography, 1931]” and “La musique dans les pays latins [Music in Latin Countries]”).

Entitled “Chroniques et notes [News and notes],” the second section of *La Revue musicale* comprises a collection of news and reviews; the rich assortment of concert reviews furnishes the readers with an extraordinary account of musical life in France and abroad. This extensive coverage contributed, without a doubt, to the journal's success. In addition to a significant number of writings on musical life in Paris (including opera, symphonic concerts, and chamber music), there are detailed reviews of concerts given in the provinces and abroad. Austria, Germany, England, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Italy, Poland, Romania, Switzerland, the United States, and even Japan are featured on a fairly regular basis in a section devoted to the musical activities of each country. The second section of the journal also includes articles on books, journals, and the press (up until 1930) as well as editions of music; to these were added, from 1926, reports on recordings (written by Prunières and his son Michel), and, from 1936, radio programmes and sound films.

¹¹ For a discussion of aesthetic issues and debates in *La Revue musicale*, see Danick Trotter, “Towards a Topology of Aesthetic Discussion Contained in *La Revue musicale* of the 1920s,” *Music's Intellectual History: Founders, Followers and Fads*, edited by Zdravko Blažeković and Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie, New York, RILM (RILM Perspectives), 2009, p. 751-759.

The journal's musicological content and its continual elaboration of aesthetic theories might be considered key factors in the definition of "neoclassical" music that was of such importance in France during this period. *La Revue musicale* tended to promote a sense of modernity that went beyond the staunch nationalism that characterized the French musical milieu before the First World War, while also forging links between early music and contemporary music through their juxtaposition within the journal. In doing so, a network of influential contributors soon flourished around the journal. In addition to correspondents from around the world (including North and South America, Japan, the Soviet Union, and most European countries), the journal could draw on the expertise of a diverse group of contributors: music critics (Émile Vuillermoz, Boris de Schloezer, Raymond Petit), musicologists (Norbert Dufourcq, René Dumesnil, Armand Machabey, Marc Pincherle, Lionel de La Laurencie, Georges de Saint-Foix), composers (Georges Auric, Gustave Samazeuilh, Suzanne Demarquez, Charles Koechlin, Darius Milhaud, Arthur Honegger, Alexandre Tansman), performers (Wanda Landowska, Ernest Ansermet, Alfred Cortot), and literary figures (Paul Claudel, Gabriel d'Annunzio, André Gide, André Suarès, and Paul Valéry).

Between 1920 and 1940, the journal produced thirty-seven special issues devoted to specific topics and composers. Some examples include issues on Claude Debussy (December 1920, vol. 1, n° 2), "La musique contemporaine russe [Contemporary Russian music]" (July 1921, vol. 2, n° 9), Fauré (October 1922, vol. 3, n° 11), "Wagner et la France [Wagner and France]" (October 1923, vol. 4, n° 11), "Ronsart et l'humanisme musical [Ronsart and musical humanism]" (May 1924, vol. 5, n° 7), Ravel (April 1925, vol. 6, n° 6), Beethoven (April 1927, vol. 8, n° 6), Liszt (May 1928, vol. 9, n° 7), "La jeunesse de Debussy [Debussy's Youth and Early Works]" (May 1926, vol. 7, n° 7), and "La musique dans les pays latins [Music in Latin countries]" (February-March 1940, vol. 21, n° 196). Among the pages of *La Revue musicale* one also finds eighty-one musical supplements, some of which consisted of unpublished music that was commissioned specifically in relation to the content of the issue in which it appeared. This was the case of those works that make up "Tombeau de Claude Debussy [Claude Debussy's Tomb]" (December 1920, vol. 1, n° 2).

In addition to its intensive editorial activities, the journal also organized concerts that bolstered its monthly publications. The journal thus became a gathering place with "*La Revue musicale's* Tuesday concerts" that sought to define the foundations and the markers of modern music as they were conceived by the director and his regular contributors. The concerts were initially organized at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier that was founded by Jacques Copeau, who was an active member of the *Nouvelle Revue française*. They provided an excellent opportunity to present the works of contemporary French and foreign composers alongside works of the old masters, and were a faithful reflection of the general programming at Copeau's theatre that intermingled works by Molière, Shakespeare, and Claudel.

La Revue musicale distinguished itself particularly through its polished appearance and rich iconography. A collector of early music prints and manuscripts, Prunières often drew on the images and engravings from his own collection to illustrate the pages of the journal. As an art connoisseur, however, he did not wish to limit himself to the reproduction of old works, and so he acquired the permission to use drawings of costume designs and stage décor for ballet and opera, including some by Léon Bakst and Pablo Picasso. Prunières also commissioned several

engravings by contemporary artists (including Valdo Barbey, Maxime Dethomas, Démétrios Galanis, Jean Émile Laboureur, and Jean Lebédeff) for special issues and articles on modern composers. Antoine Bourdelle, Jean Cocteau, André Derain, Raoul Dufy, and Fernand Ochsé figured among the journal's illustrators.

The library at the University of Montreal has an original, bound copy of *La Revue musicale* in its holdings; the indexing of the journal was based on this copy as well as a few unbound issues that have been preserved in their original condition.

In putting together this index, the research team has sought to develop an effective research tool. In addition to names of people, works, musical institutions, theatres, concert halls, newspapers, journals, and geographical locations, researchers will also encounter terms that describe musical form, style, and genre, instrumentation, and trends in aesthetics and technology.

Please take note that the numbering of issues in *La Revue musicale*, which starts over at one in November for the first ten years, changes in the eleventh year (January 1930) in order to emphasize the journal's one hundredth issue; the three-digit numbering is henceforth maintained. Dating errors in certain issues have been identified in the chronological catalogue with the use of "sic". The advertising section in the bound edition sometimes appears to have been moved, as the advertisements were generally bound at the beginning of the issue. We have systematically adopted this ordering in the chronological catalogue. Along with the principal advertising section were advertisements for the musical supplements; these have been indicated in the catalogue at the appropriate place.

The transcription of the data has been accomplished as faithfully as possible given the journal's contents. Despite a concerted effort by Prunières and his colleagues, the journal's contents contain substantial divergences with regard to the spelling of names and the titles of works that vary from one issue to the next, and even from one column to another. Certain entries in the index have therefore been standardized for the sake of coherence. We have thus adopted the spelling used in Theodore Baker and Nicolas Slonimsky's *Dictionnaire biographique des musiciens* (Paris, Robert Laffont, 1995, coll. "Bouquins") for composers' names, with the exception of that of Schönberg. The titles of twentieth-century compositions are listed in their original language, while the titles of works from the standard repertory are in French. Titles of works in Slavic languages are also translated in French, following the journal's general practice of gallicizing many of the foreign language titled works. As for the names of institutions and musical ensembles, they appear in their original language, as the tendency to gallicize the names of musical organizations was much less consistent in the journal.

The catalogue and index comprise the first complete analysis of the contents of *La Revue musicale*, the most important Francophone periodical during the interwar period, and provide researchers with access to a tremendous amount of information on musical life and works during this period.